



TESTIMONY
of the
CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF MUNICIPALITIES
to the
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 28, 2011

CCM is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 90% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony to you on issues of concern to towns and cities.

CCM has concerns with HB 6423 "An Act Concerning Closing the Achievement Gap."

Among a variety of worthy proposals to help bridge the achievement gap, Section 8 of this bill would mandate that already struggling priority school districts (1) expand local school readiness programs and make room for ALL eligible children, and (2) provide full-day Kindergarten to ALL resident students.

Until the inequitable local cost burden for education is fully addressed, no new mandates can be forced down on local governments - especially in our poorest districts who can least afford to expand services. If the state deems this path as a solid part of the solution to this problem, it should fund such programs itself.

In addition, this bill in no way even attempts to address the root causes of Connecticut's achievement gap that occur outside of the school parameters. *CCM's 2011 State Legislative Program* urges establishing a legislative committee to thoroughly examine the impact of poverty, transience, truancy, and other impacting factors that contribute to our current achievement gap - and - develop strong strategies to over come these. Over the last many years, the state has only acted to "band-aid" the problem with new and costly mandates, such as PA 10-111 (High School Reform), that only treats the symptoms and not the problem.

CCM urges this committee to oppose this bill and take no action on it.

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If you have any questions, please contact Kachina Walsh-Weaver, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM via email kweaver@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 710-9525.